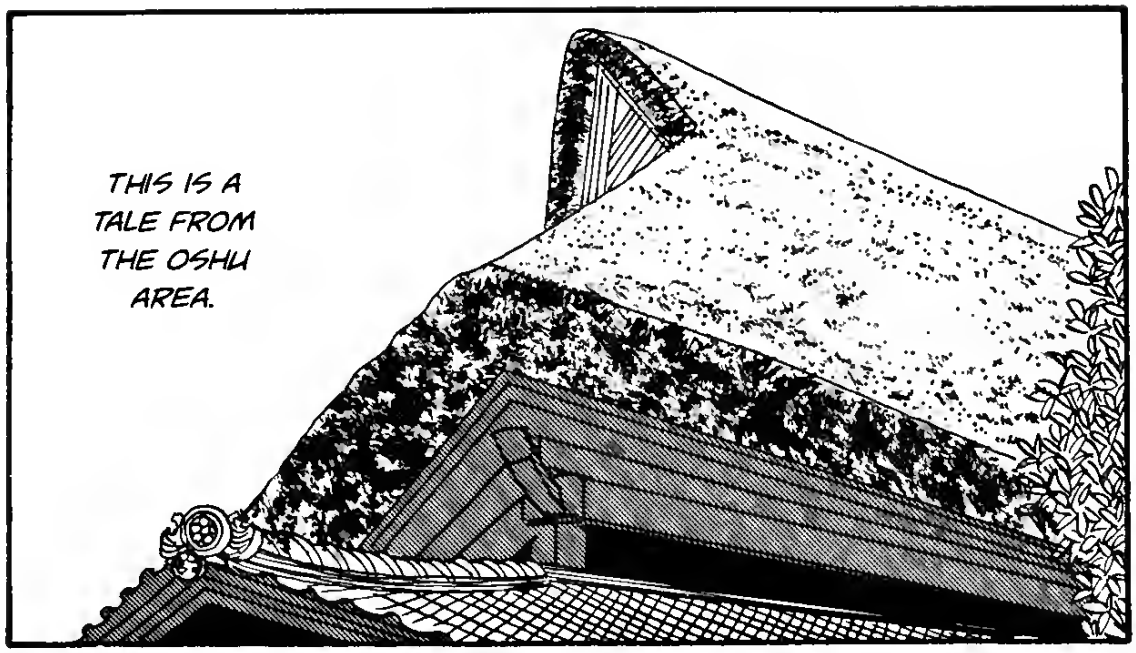
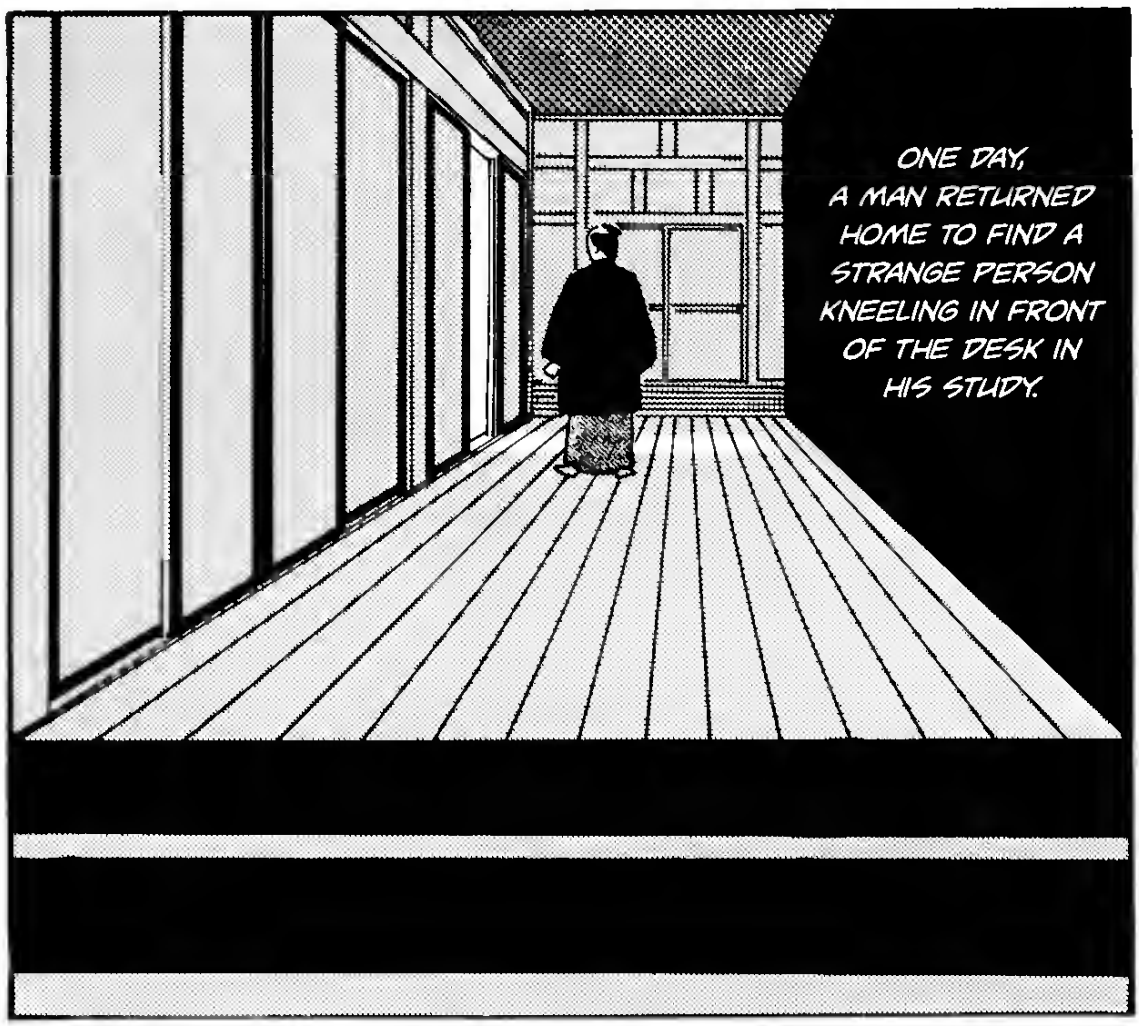
Tale 16

The Man who Saw a Shadow


THIS IS A TALE FROM THE OSHU AREA.


ONE DAY, A MAN RETURNED HOME TO FIND A STRANGE PERSON KNEELING IN FRONT OF THE DESK IN HIS STUDY.

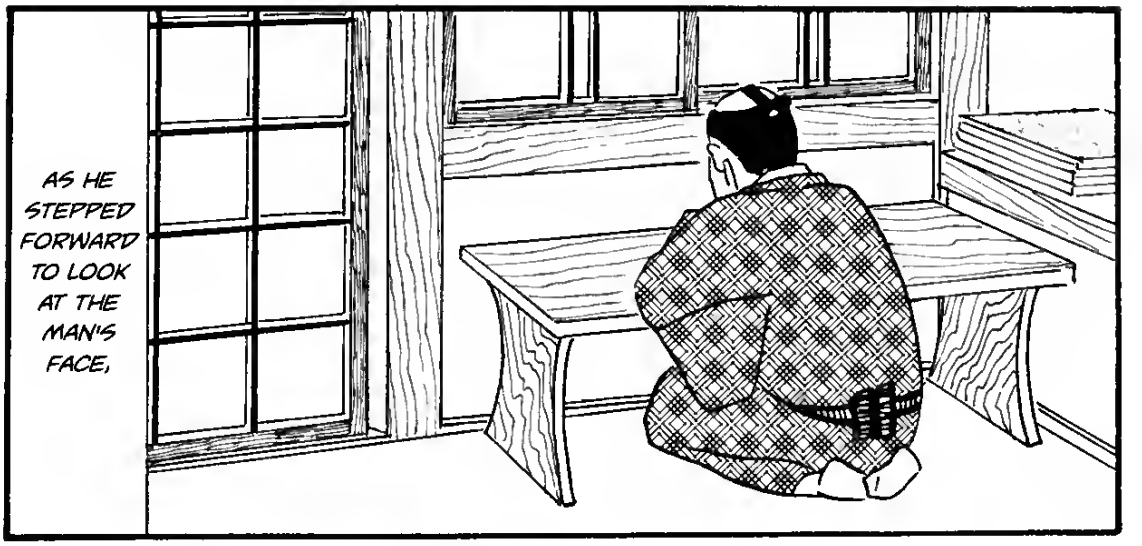
HE KNEW THAT SOMETIMES HIS WIFE AND MOTHER HAD VISITORS, BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THIS.

WHO WOULD HAVE COME INSIDE AND MADE THEMSELVES AT HOME LIKE THIS WHILE HE WAS GONE?

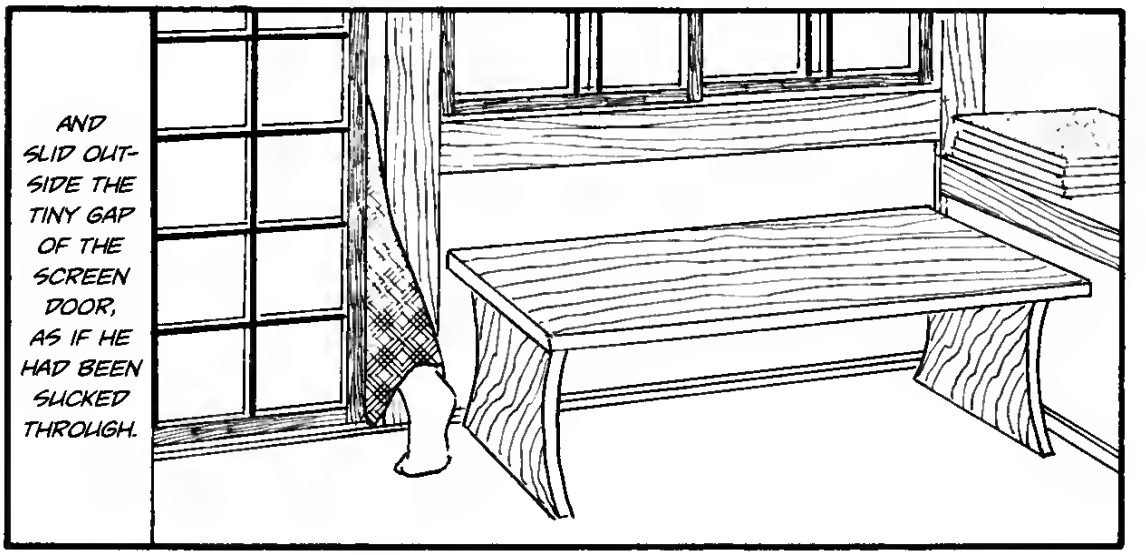
THE SAME WAS TRUE FOR THE SHAPE OF THE MAN'S HAIR, THE WAY HIS HANDS MOVED, AND THE GESTURES HE MADE...

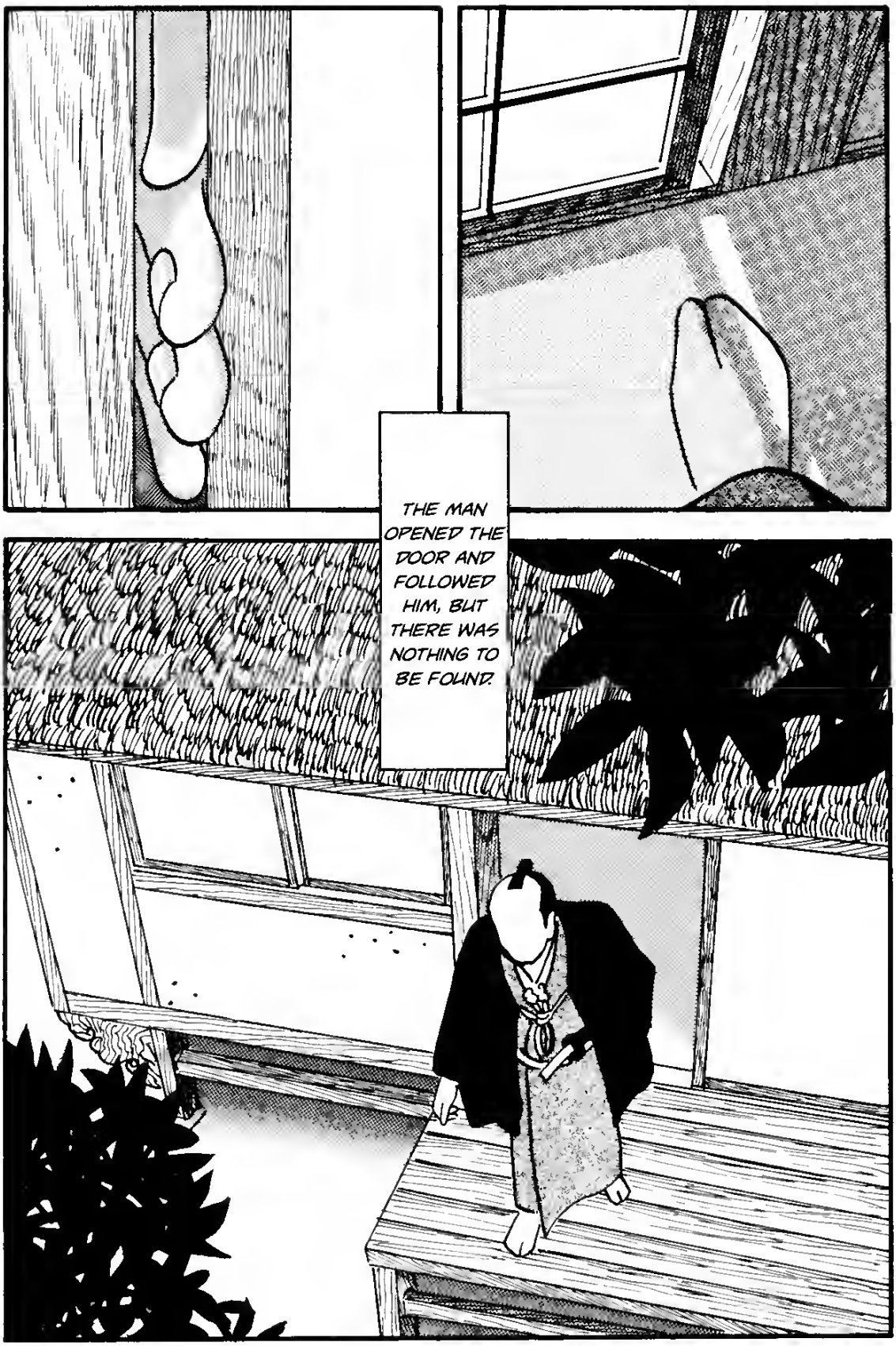
AS HE CONTINUED TO STARE, HE REALIZED THAT THE KIMONO AND BELT THAT THE MAN WAS WEARING LOOKED JUST LIKE HIS.

HE HAD NEVER SEEN HIS OWN BACK, BUT HE IMAGINED IT WOULD LOOK MUCH LIKE THIS.


AS HE STEPPED FORWARD TO LOOK AT THE MAN'S FACE,

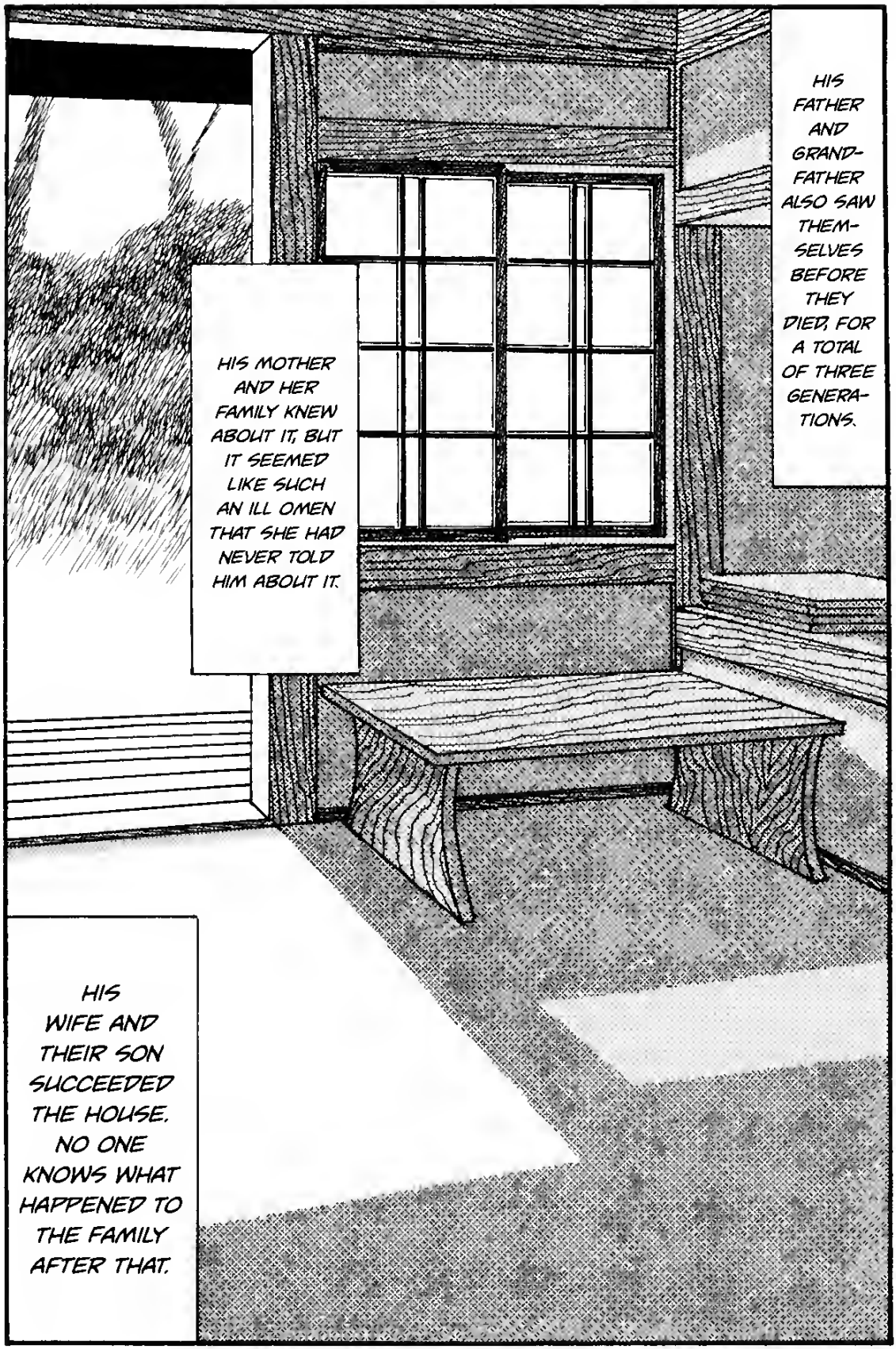
THE MAN KEPT HIS HEAD FACING FOR-WARD


AND SLID OUT-SIDE THE TINY GAP OF THE SCREEN DOOR, AS IF HE HAD BEEN SUCKED THROUGH.


THE MAN OPENED THE DOOR AND FOLLOWED HIM, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING TO BE FOUND.

HIS MOTHER, WHO WAS LISTENING TO THE SIDE, DROOPED DOWN WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING.
WHEN HE TOLD HIS WIFE ABOUT IT,

LATER THAT YEAR, THE MAN DIED.


HIS FATHER AND GRAND-FATHER ALSO SAW THEM-SELVES BEFORE THEY DIED, FOR A TOTAL OF THREE GENERA-TIONS.
HIS MOTHER AND HER FAMILY KNEW ABOUT IT, BUT IT SEEMED LIKE SUCH AN ILL OMEN THAT SHE HAD NEVER TOLD HIM ABOUT IT.
HIS WIFE AND THEIR SON SUCCEEDED THE HOUSE. NO ONE KNOWS WHAT HAPPENED TO THE FAMILY AFTER THAT.